

Follow-up Plan Guidelines

The following sections contain suggestions for Public Housing Agency (PHA) management to develop a Follow-up Plan (to be submitted as part of the Annual Plan) based on results from the Resident Service and Satisfaction Survey. Each PHA should tailor the Follow-up Plan to address their own specific needs and the results from the survey (see “On-line Survey Question Report” in the next section). It is important to remember that the guidelines below are recommendations only. If there are other methods that are not listed which you feel would better address the issues for your specific housing agency, PIH-REAC encourages you to use them as you develop your Follow-up Plan. The more a PHA can involve residents in the overall day-to-day issues and concerns of managing the development(s), the greater understanding residents will have of what is required to effectively manage a PHA. A partnering and resident ownership approach between management and residents provides a cohesive bond and facilitates a healthy community environment that can better address concerns and issues both parties may have.

On-line Survey Question Report

A PHA can view information on how residents responded to RASS questions, by *question response choices*, i.e., the percentage of residents that indicated a specific level of satisfaction for each question choice. The Survey Question Report is available on the **PHA Main Screen** – a link in the bottom right corner of the page takes the user to question-specific information that can be useful in developing and certifying an appropriate Follow-Up Plan.

Maintenance and Repair

The score for the Maintenance & Repair section measures how adequately and quickly PHAs respond to resident maintenance requests and how satisfied residents are with repairs. The following are suggestions for making improvements in this area.

- It is important that you arrange to communicate with residents (hold resident meeting(s), meet with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB), other resident groups, or meet with residents on an individual basis) regarding their concerns and perceptions on this issue. You may want to have follow-up meetings with residents to maintain a continuous line of communication on issues and problems. Consider a meeting schedule of at least 2 to 4 times a fiscal year. If issues and problem areas that residents identify are improved, resident satisfaction with the Maintenance and Repair survey section should improve.
- If you have already received a score for your Physical Assessment, it would be logical to assume that deficiencies identified in this area may correlate to resident dissatisfaction with Maintenance & Repair. Addressing these deficiencies should also correspond to a rise in resident satisfaction for this survey section.

- Ensure that you are identifying major recurring problems and trends. Identify immediate and long-term solutions to maintenance problems, including funding sources, i.e., operating budget, reserves, city, state, etc.
- Ensure that you have a system that accounts for and manages **work orders**. It should document the timeliness involved with the preparation and issuance of work orders.
- Provide feedback to maintenance staff on the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of work order preparation and repairs. Consider an incentive for staff members who excel such as bonuses and/or recognition.
- Ensure that all PHA staff are clear on what constitutes an Emergency Work Order and what constitutes a Non-Emergency Work Order:

Emergency Work Order – issued to correct a condition that poses an immediate threat to life, health, safety or property, or related to fire safety. Examples include, but are not limited to, an unhealthy or undrinkable water supply, gas leak, broken/blocked sanitary sewer line, failed heating system, hazardous electrical system, uninhabitable unit as a result of a fire, and situations causing exposure to asbestos, lead based paint, or other toxic materials.

Non-Emergency Work Order – issued to correct conditions that do not pose an immediate threat to life, health, safety or property, or are not related to fire safety.

- Ensure that maintenance staff are adequately trained. Offer training opportunities (i.e. classes at the PHA or opportunities to attend outside courses) and hire qualified, experienced staff. Training should include professional conduct standards for communication with residents, resident notification requirements regarding maintenance entry, and the manner in which conditions should be left once work is completed.
- Apprenticeship training programs on the various maintenance vocations for residents with the possibility of eventual employment with PHA as a journeyman maintenance staff resource will increase resident involvement, understanding, and ultimately their satisfaction.
- Do not place a quick fix on a repair problem. Resolve the problem so it does not continue to occur in the future. If a repair is requested, ensure that the problem is thoroughly investigated and fixed correctly the first time. It may be more expensive initially, but it will save you money in the future and increase your Maintenance and Repair survey section score.

- Partner with a housing agency that scored high on the PHAS to benchmark their success, adopt their lessons learned, and incorporate their methods. Contact HUD headquarters or your local HUD field office to obtain copies of other PHAs' Maintenance Plans, etc.
- Visit your local HUD office to talk to them about potential methods for improvement.

Communication

Clearly communicating services, procedures, other neighborhood-related issues and activities is a critical component in the success of a development. This section measures the level of that communication in the area of events, activities, and programs available to residents, and the ability of residents to communicate with management regarding problems and issues. The following are suggestions for making improvements in this area:

- It is important that you arrange to communicate with residents (hold resident meetings, meet with the RAB and other resident groups, or meet with residents on an individual basis) regarding their concerns and perceptions on this issue. If issues that they identify as problems are improved, their satisfaction level with the Communication survey section should improve.
- Train PHA staff to effectively and politely communicate with residents. Conduct role-playing exercises and demonstrate the appropriate manner to interact with residents. Ensure that customer satisfaction is one of your top goals.
- Ensure there are adequate internal PHA communications.
- Make sure there are written policies and procedures and that residents have copies of them, as well as input and agreement with them. Avoid dictating policy and encourage residents to participate in policy development.
- Have frequent resident meetings, inviting the residents to help set your agenda.
- Try to communicate with residents in their spoken language, if they do not understand English.
- Identify an effective method of communicating with residents, such as flyers/letters sent with rent statement, flyers/letters placed in all mailboxes or a community bulletin board.
- Assist and encourage residents to be part of the solution and to join or develop committees/organizations that can improve the community.

- Notify residents of improvements being made to the property. The possibility of positive change can be an incentive for residents to be involved in their development and maintain their own unit better.

Safety

The goal of this survey section is to capture how safe residents feel and to assess if the housing agency is making efforts to provide safe living conditions. The following are suggestions for making improvements in this area:

- It is important that you arrange to communicate with residents (hold resident meeting(s), meet with the RAB and other resident groups, or meet with residents on an individual basis) regarding their concern and perceptions of safety. If situations are improved that they identify as problem areas the satisfaction level of the Safety survey section should improve.
- Partner with police. Cooperation with police can include, but is not limited to:
 1. Units deprogrammed for use as police substations;
 2. Periodic and regular meetings between the local police agency and PHA management;
 3. Provision for access by the local police agency to vacant units in order to facilitate surveillance and pursuit;
 4. Provision of community space for police/community meetings;
 5. Police input into modernization planning, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design assessments and planning;
 6. DARE, Weed and Seed Initiatives, and other Federal/local law enforcement efforts;
 7. Gun and drug checks;
 8. Youth counseling;
 9. Youth recreational activities;
 10. Community policing/watch programs;
 11. Security assessments and surveys;
 12. Resident Patrol Program;
 13. Community Anti-crime Implementation Team Training;
 14. Block Watch, Block Parents, Neighborhood Watch;
 15. Abandon Vehicle removal program.
- Actively promote interaction between residents and police.
- Report all criminal activity to local police authorities. Provide PHA reporting forms for staff and residents that are anonymous as to the person reporting.
- Policies and procedures in place for tracking crime and crime-related activities, should be able to demonstrate that crime and crime-related problems are being tracked by property.

- Institute a resident screening process that denies housing admission to those individuals who do not meet the legal criteria established by HUD and the PHA Board resolution. Instituted HUD's Screening and Eviction for Drug Abuse and Other Criminal Activity Policy, 24 CFR Parts 5 et al. Involve residents in the policy and implementation process of how the PHA administers this policy.
- Establish policies that define safe behavior for residents with the correct level of repercussions for violating policy. Ask residents for suggestions and feed back on behavioral issues and policy implementation. Consider a review board for minor incidents staffed by PHA staff and residents.
- Add additional lighting in common areas, and periodically check all lights to make sure they are working. Also, poll residents as to their opinions for placement of lights.
- Check all locks and outside doors to assure they are not in disrepair, and repair all locks that are damaged. Remove all obstacles that block viewing windows and doors from the street or other buildings.
- Provide children and teenagers a place to play. Build and/or maintain neighborhood playgrounds, and basketball courts. Create youth programs to discourage crime among that age group. Consider Resident Opportunity Self-Sufficiency programs, such as Neighbor Networks computer learning centers.
- Offer a course on basic home safety to residents.
- Provide preventative drug related services to residents, such as:
 1. Preventative drug education;
 2. Referral sources for drug intervention and treatment programs and provide a citywide listing of referral sources;
 3. Work with resident councils or other formal resident groups in the implementation of drug elimination programs.
- Encourage police departments to have an anonymous 1-800 crime reporting line. If one is in place, publish the number in the PHA housing newsletter, on bulletin boards, at residents meetings, etc. Also, discuss the importance of using this resource at meetings.

Services

The Services survey section includes both basic housing services such as electricity and water, plumbing, and other services that PHAs should make available to residents. The following are suggestions for improvements in this area:

- It is important that you arrange to communicate with residents (hold resident meetings, meet with the RAB and other resident groups, or meet with residents on an

individual basis) regarding their concern and perceptions concerning the Services survey section. If areas that they identify as problems are improved, the satisfaction level of the Services survey section should improve.

- Partner with your local city or HUD Field Office to bring needed services to your residents such as job training and placement. Ensure that job-training programs emphasize job acquisition and retention skills.
- Provide childcare information to residents – either formally, informally, or both. For example: Provide a list of child care providers in your area with phone numbers.
- Work with local schools to start adult education programs, such as GED training, computer classes, and vocational training at the local community colleges.
- Partner with a local college or education agency to provide tutoring services for residents' academic or linguistic needs.
- Provide programs that enhance and encourage school attendance and reward academic excellence,.
- Provide intergenerational programs. For example, organize a group of older residents who advise the younger residents on child rearing.
- Provide self-improvement or self-sufficiency programs for residents, such as:
 1. Financial Counseling
 2. Nutrition and personal development classes
- Provide homeownership opportunities to residents. Set up an on-going system to answer questions and inform residents about homeownership options. For example:
 1. Write newsletter articles explaining the intricacies of HOPE VI and/or other homeownership programs, along with phone numbers for obtaining more information
 2. Hang posters and bulletin board presentations promoting homeownership
 3. Provide counseling seminars for interested residents – housing counseling referrals are provided by HUD via a toll free number, 1-800-569-4287
 4. develop financing arrangements with state and local housing finance agencies, private entities, etc.

Housing Property Appearance

A poorly maintained property can lead to a number of problems. The appearance of the housing property should be neat and orderly. Ideally, the development should positively compliment the community and there should not be a clear line that defines the borders of the property due to perpetual problems such as litter, broken glass, and vandalism. Residents are encouraged to be part of the solution to help maintain the property. There

is an established process in place for residents to report problems. It is to management's advantage to respond in a timely and professional manner to remedy appearance problems in the community. The following are suggestions for improvements in this area:

- It is important that you arrange to communicate with residents (hold resident meetings, meet with the RAB and other resident groups or meet with residents on an individual basis) regarding their concern and perceptions concerning property appearance. If issues that residents identify as problems are improved, the Housing Property Appearance survey section satisfaction level should improve.
- Have a system for dealing with abandoned buildings and vacancy.
- Have an agreement with the police department for towing abandoned and unregistered vehicles.
- Maintain parking areas, parking lot surfaces, and parking space markings.
- Have a vehicle registration policy. Consider a PHA parking permit system. Limit the number of vehicles per household.
- Do not allow vehicles to park on the lawn.
- Exterminate pests regularly and on an as needed basis.
- Implement quarterly trash days on which large items can be picked up.
- Be proactive about improving the appearance of the neighborhood. Do an assessment (at least a visual review) of your community on a regular basis. Don't just depend on staff to inform you of problems.
- Start a neighborhood appearance council made up of residents. Award a prize(s) or recognize residents with the best-kept yards, and recognize those individuals in a newsletter.
- Eliminate graffiti within 24 hours of report.